

Application No.: 10/801,523
Amendment and Response to Office Action dated March 9, 2006

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace all prior versions of the claims with the listing of claims that follows:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A wrap-around article carrier for carrying a plurality of articles comprising:

(a) a top panel, opposite side panels and a bottom panel comprising an inner flap with a terminal edge and an outer flap with a terminal edge, with a portion of the outer flap overlapping a portion of the inner flap;

(b) the inner flap having at least one primary lock ledge formed by a primary female opening in the inner flap, the outer flap having a primary male lock for each lock ledge which is formed by a slit cut in the outer flap; and

(c) the outer flap having at least one secondary male lock with two shoulders attached by a neck to the terminal edge of the flap, and the inner flap having a secondary female opening for each secondary male lock, the secondary female opening being further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the primary female opening, with each secondary female opening formed by a secondary cut line and fold line which is closer to the terminal edge of the inner flap than the cut line, the fold line having a center and two ends with the secondary cut line at least nearly meeting the fold line at each end of the fold line, the secondary cut line having a center that is significantly further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the rest of the cut line, the secondary cut line and fold line forming a female flap in the secondary female opening with the fold line projecting towards the terminal edge of the inner flap from the ends of the fold line to the center, the secondary cut line comprising an extension cut extending beyond each end of the fold line to form a secondary locking ledge along the side of the extension cut remote from the terminal edge of the inner flap.

2. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 1, wherein the extension cut turns and projects towards the terminal edge of the inner flap at a point remote from each end of the fold line.

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3. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 1, wherein each secondary female opening has a slit that extends for a short distance from the secondary cut line near each end of the fold line in a direction away from the terminal edge of the inner flap.

4. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 3, wherein the neck of each secondary male lock has two edges, with the distance between the edges of the neck being less than the distance between the slits, with the neck of the secondary male lock being designed to be located in the secondary female opening between the slits.

5. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 1, which has been loaded with articles and each primary male lock is engaged with a lock ledge formed by a primary female opening, and the shoulder of each secondary male lock is engaged with a secondary locking ledge, thereby securing the articles in the carrier.

6. (currently amended) A wrap-around article carrier for carrying a plurality of articles comprising:

(a) a top panel, opposite side panels and a bottom panel comprising an inner flap with a terminal edge and an outer flap with a terminal edge with a portion of the outer flap overlapping a portion of the inner flap;

(b) the inner flap having at least one primary lock ledge formed by a primary female opening in the inner flap, the outer flap having a primary male lock for each lock ledge which is formed by a slit cut in the outer flap; and

(c) the outer flap having at least one secondary male lock with two shoulders attached by a neck to the terminal edge of the flap, and the inner flap having a secondary female opening for each secondary male lock, the secondary female opening being further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the primary female opening, with each secondary female opening formed by a secondary cut line and fold line which is closer to the terminal edge of the inner flap than the cut line, the fold line being arcuate shaped and having a center and two ends with the center being closer to the terminal edge of the inner flap than the ends of the fold line, the secondary cut line meeting the fold line at each end of the fold line, the secondary cut line being

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V shaped with the apex of the V being further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the rest of the cut line, the secondary cut line and fold line forming a female flap in the secondary female opening, the secondary cut line comprising an extension cut extending beyond each end of the fold line to form a secondary locking ledge along the side of the extension cut remote from the terminal edge of the inner flap.

7. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 6, which has been loaded with articles and each primary male lock is engaged with a lock ledge formed by a primary female opening, and the shoulder of each secondary male lock is engaged with a secondary locking ledge, thereby securing the articles in the carrier.

8. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 6, wherein the extension cut turns and projects towards the terminal edge of the inner flap at a point remote from each end of the fold line.

9. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with a plurality of articles of claim 7, wherein each secondary female opening has a slit that extends for a short distance from the secondary cut line near each end of the fold line in a direction away from the terminal edge of the inner flap.

10. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with a plurality of articles of claim 9, wherein the neck of each secondary male lock has two edges, with the distance between the edges of the neck being less than the distance between the slits, with the neck of the secondary male lock being designed to be located in the secondary female opening between the slits.

11. (currently amended) A blank for forming a wrap-around carrier for carrying a plurality of containers comprising:

(a) a top panel, opposite side panels and a bottom panel comprising an inner flap with a terminal edge and an outer flap with a terminal edge;

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(b) the inner flap having at least one primary lock ledge formed by a primary female opening in the inner flap, the outer flap having a primary male lock for each lock ledge which is formed by a slit cut in the outer flap; and

(c) the outer flap having at least one secondary male lock with two shoulders attached by a neck to the terminal edge of the flap, and the inner flap having a secondary female opening for each secondary male lock, the secondary female opening being further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the primary female opening, with each secondary female opening formed by a secondary cut line and fold line which is closer to the terminal edge of the inner flap than the cut line, the fold line having a center and two ends with the secondary cut line at least nearly meeting the fold line at each end of the fold line, the secondary cut line having a center that is significantly further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the rest of the cut line, the secondary cut line and fold line forming a female flap in the secondary female opening with the fold line projecting towards the terminal edge of the inner flap from the ends of the fold line to the center, the secondary cut line comprising an extension cut extending beyond each end of the fold line to form a secondary locking ledge along the side of the extension cut remote from the terminal edge of the inner flap.

12. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 1, for carrying a plurality of containers in two rows, the carrier having at least two sets of:

- (a) a primary male lock and corresponding primary lock ledge; and
- (b) a secondary male lock and two secondary locking ledges.

13. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 6, for carrying a plurality of containers in two rows, the carrier having at least two sets of:

- (a) a primary male lock and corresponding primary lock ledge; and
- (b) a secondary male lock and two secondary locking ledges.

14. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 1, for carrying a plurality of containers in at least one row.

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15. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 6, for carrying a plurality of containers in at least one row.

16. (currently amended) A wrap-around carrier loaded with a plurality of containers in two rows, the carrier comprising:

(a) a top panel, opposite side panels and a bottom panel comprising an inner flap with a terminal edge and an outer flap with a terminal edge, with a portion of the outer flap overlapping a portion of the inner flap;

(b) the inner flap having at least two primary lock ledges, with each ledge formed by a primary female opening in the inner flap, the outer flap having a primary male lock for each lock ledge which is formed by a slit cut in the outer flap, with each primary male lock being engaged with a primary locking ledge, with each primary male lock being at least substantially flat against the inner flap; and

(c) the outer flap having at least two secondary male locks, with each secondary male lock attached by a neck to the terminal edge of the flap, and the inner flap having a secondary female opening for each secondary male lock, the secondary female opening being further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the primary female opening, with each secondary female opening formed by a secondary cut line and fold line which is closer to the terminal edge of the inner flap than the cut line, the fold line having a center and two ends with the secondary cut line at least nearly meeting the fold line at each end of the fold line, the secondary cut line having a center that is significantly further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the rest of the cut line, the secondary cut line and fold line forming a female flap in the secondary female opening with the fold line projecting towards the terminal edge of the inner flap from the ends of the fold line to the center, the secondary cut line comprising an extension cut extending beyond each end of the fold line to form a secondary locking ledge along the side of the extension cut remote from the terminal edge of the inner flap, with each secondary male lock extending through a secondary female opening with each shoulder of each secondary male lock engaging a secondary locking ledge, with each secondary male lock being at least substantially flat against the inner flap of the carrier.

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17. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with a plurality of containers in two rows of claim 16, wherein the extension cut turns and projects towards the terminal edge of the inner flap at a point remote from each end of the fold line.

18. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with a plurality of containers in two rows of claim 16, wherein each secondary female opening has a pair of slits that extend for a short distance from the secondary cut line near each end of the fold line in a direction away from the terminal edge of the inner flap.

19. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with containers of two rows of claim 18, wherein the neck of each secondary male lock has two edges, with the distance between the edges of the neck being less than the distance between the slits, with the neck of the secondary male lock being designed to be located in the secondary female opening between the slits.

20. (canceled).

21. (original) The wrap-around carrier of claim 16, wherein the containers are either bottles or cans.

22. (currently amended) A wrap-around carrier loaded with a plurality of containers in one row, the carrier comprising:

(a) a top panel, opposite side panels and a bottom panel comprising an inner flap with a terminal edge and an outer flap with a terminal edge with a portion of the outer flap overlapping a portion of the inner flap;

(b) the inner flap having at least two primary lock ledges, with each ledge formed by a primary female opening in the inner flap, the outer flap having a primary male lock for each lock ledge which is formed by a slit cut in the outer flap, with each primary male lock being engaged with a primary locking ledge, with each primary male lock being at least substantially flat against the inner flap; and

(c) the outer flap having at least two secondary male locks, with each secondary male lock attached by a neck to the terminal edge of the flap, and the inner flap having a secondary

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female opening for each secondary male lock, the secondary female opening being further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the primary female opening, with each secondary female opening formed by a secondary cut line and fold line which is closer to the terminal edge of the inner flap than the cut line, the fold line having a center and two ends with the secondary cut line at least nearly meeting the fold line at each end of the fold line, the secondary cut line having a center that is significantly further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the rest of the cut line, the secondary cut line and fold line forming a female flap in the secondary female opening with the fold line projecting towards the terminal edge of the inner flap from the ends of the fold line to the center, the secondary cut line comprising an extension cut extending beyond each end of the fold line to form a secondary locking ledge along the side of the extension cut remote from the terminal edge of the inner flap, with each secondary male lock extending through a secondary female opening with each shoulder of each secondary male lock engaging a secondary locking ledge, with each secondary male lock being at least substantially flat against the inner flap of the carrier.

23. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with a plurality of containers in one row of claim 22, wherein the extension cut turns and projects towards the terminal edge of the inner flap at a point remote from each end of the fold line.

24. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with a plurality of containers in one row of claim 22, wherein a pair of slits that extend for a short distance from the secondary cut line near each end of the fold line in a direction away from the terminal edge of the inner flap.

25-27. (canceled).

28. (currently amended) A wrap-around carrier loaded with at least four containers in two rows, the carrier comprising:

(a) a top panel, opposite side panels and a bottom panel comprising an inner flap with a terminal edge and an outer flap with a terminal edge, with a portion of the outer flap overlapping a portion of the inner flap;

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(b) the inner flap having at least two primary locking ledges, with each ledge formed by a primary female opening in the inner flap, the outer flap having a primary male lock for each lock ledge which is formed by a slit cut in the outer flap with each primary lock being engaged with a primary locking ledge, with each primary male lock being at least substantially flat against the inner flap; and

(c) the outer flap having at least two secondary male locks with each secondary male lock attached by a neck to the terminal edge of the flap, and the inner flap having a secondary female opening for each secondary male lock, the secondary female opening being further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the primary female opening, with each secondary female opening formed by a secondary cut line and fold line which is closer to the terminal edge of the inner flap than the cut line, the fold line having a center and two ends with the secondary cut line at least nearly meeting the fold line at each end of the fold line, the secondary cut line having a center that is significantly further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the rest of the cut line, the secondary cut line and fold line forming a female flap in the secondary female opening with the fold line projecting towards the terminal edge of the inner flap from the ends of the fold line to the center, the secondary cut line comprising an extension cut extending beyond each end of the fold line to form a secondary locking ledge along the side of the extension cut remote from the terminal edge of the inner flap, with each secondary male lock extending through a secondary female opening with each shoulder of each secondary male lock engaging a secondary locking ledge, with each secondary male lock being at least substantially flat against the inner flap of the carrier.

29. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with at least four containers in two rows of claim 28, wherein the extension cut turns and projects towards the terminal edge of the inner flap at a point remote from each end of the fold line.

30. (original) The wrap-around carrier loaded with at least four bottles in two rows of claim 28, wherein a pair of slits that extend for a short distance from the secondary cut line near each end of the fold line in a direction away from the terminal edge of the inner flap.

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31. (currently amended) An interlocking panel in an article carrier, the interlocking panel being connected to opposite side panels of the carrier, the interlocking panel comprising:

(a) inner and outer flaps which are connected to the side panels of the carrier, the inner and outer flaps each having a terminal edge, with a portion of the outer flap overlapping a portion of the inner flap;

(b) the inner flap having at least one primary lock ledge formed by a primary female opening in the inner flap, the outer flap having a primary male lock for each lock ledge which is formed by a slit cut in the outer flap; and

(c) the outer flap having at least one secondary male lock with two shoulders attached by a neck to the terminal edge of the flap, and the inner flap having a secondary female opening for each secondary male lock, the secondary female opening being further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the primary female opening, with each secondary female opening formed by a secondary cut line and fold line which is closer to the terminal edge of the inner flap than the cut line, the fold line having a center and two ends with the secondary cut line at least nearly meeting the fold line at each end of the fold line, the secondary cut line having a center that is significantly further from the terminal edge of the inner flap than the rest of the cut line, the secondary cut line and fold line forming a female flap in the secondary female opening with the fold line projecting towards the terminal edge of the inner flap from the ends of the fold line to the center, the secondary cut line comprising an extension cut extending beyond each end of the fold line to form a secondary locking ledge along the side of the extension cut remote from